

Renowned Scientist to Lead California Stem Cell Institute: "An inspired choice"

Posted: September 13, 2007

SAN FRANCISCO, September 14, 2007 The governing board of the California Institute for Regenerative Medicine (CIRM) has named Alan O. Trounson, Ph.D. as the new permanent president of the state's \$3 billion stem cell agency.

Dr. Trounson, 61, is currently the Director of the Immunology and Stem Cell Laboratories at Monash University in Australia. He is a founder of the Australian Stem Cell Centre; he is one of the leading international experts in the field; and he was an early pioneer of both in vitro fertilization and embryonic stem cell research. Over the past 30 years, he founded eight companies devoted to infertility treatment, biotechnology, and stem cells. He divested his interest in his stem cell company to avoid any potential conflicts of interest, as he advanced his academic research and governmental advocacy for the field.

"We wanted an individual who can provide the global strategic leadership necessary to turn stem cells into therapies and cures," said Robert N. Klein, chairman of the Independent Citizens Oversight Committee, CIRM's governing board. "Dr. Trounson has a unique set of skills and experience that will meet that need. He's widely regarded as one of the finest stem cell scientists in the world. He's a successful entrepreneur who understands how laboratory results are translated into clinical practice. We are thrilled that he has accepted this assignment."

"California is the epicenter of stem cell research," said Dr. Trounson. "Scientists all over the world were in awe when the state committed \$3 billion over 10 years to stem cell research. The work that's been done at CIRM in the past three years is equally impressive. It's a great project with dedicated staff members and a tremendous resource of expertise available on the governing board, the ICOC. I'm delighted to have the chance to lead the CIRM. It's a wonderful continuation of my career in science."

Dr. Trounson will assume the CIRM presidency in late December. Until then, he will be closing out his lab and faculty responsibilities at Monash. "I'm at a point in my life where I could continue doing research and publish a few more papers in great journals. CIRM clearly offers the chance to make significantly greater contributions to stem cell research."

Richard A. Murphy, Ph.D. remains CIRM's interim president, and will continue consulting with the agency for several months after Dr. Trounson's tenure begins. "Alan brings enormous international credibility and experience to CIRM. He is an ideal president for this organization, and I look forward to working closely with him and with CIRM's outstanding staff to ease his transition into this position," said Dr. Murphy.

Dr. George Daley, a professor at Harvard University and the president of the International Society for Stem Cell Research, called Dr. Trounson "a terrific, inspired choice." "The federal government has left a vacuum that California has had to fill," he said. "This position is going to be the single most important steward of stem cell research internationally. To have someone of Alan's prominence in this role is recognition of the incredible impact California is having on the field."

"Dr. Trounson is a tremendous recruit for CIRM," added Dr. Edward Holmes, Executive Deputy Chairman of the A*Star Biomedical Research Council. "He is an internationally respected stem cell researcher and brings real domain expertise to this appointment. He is a proven leader with experience in forming stem cell research programs in Australia. He has outstanding interpersonal skills and is a strong proponent of collaborative research. In addition, he brings an international perspective as CIRM assumes the role of global leader in stem cell research."

Dr. Trounson earned bachelors and masters degrees from the School of Wool and Pastoral Sciences at the University of New South Wales in Sydney, and a doctorate in embryology from Sydney University. In addition to his faculty position at Monash, he currently holds (or has held) the following appointments:

Founder and Foundation CEO, Australian Stem Cell Center

Chairman, Victorian Endowment for Science and Innovation (VESKI)

Chairman, Low Cost IVF Foundation

Professor, Stem Cell Sciences, Monash University

Foundation Board Member, International Society for Stem Cell Research

Chair, Government Affairs Committee, International Society for Stem Cell Research

Member, International Advisory Council, International Society for Stem Cell Research

Science Advisory Board Member, Genetics Policy Institute

International Scientific Advisory Board, Max-Planck Institute for Molecular Biomedicine

Director, Centre for Early Human Development, Faculty of Medicine, Monash

University (1985-2002)

Deputy Director/Director, Monash Institute for Reproduction and Development,

Faculty of Medicine, Monash University (1990-2002)

About CIRM

CIRM was established in 2004 with the passage of Proposition 71, the California Stem Cell Research and Cures Act. The statewide ballot measure, which provided \$3 billion in funding for stem cell research at California universities and research institutions, was overwhelmingly approved by voters, and called for the establishment of an entity to make grants and provide loans for stem cell research, research facilities, and other vital research opportunities. To date, the CIRM governing board has approved 136 research grants totaling almost \$208 million, making CIRM the largest source of funding for human embryonic stem cell research in the world. For more information, please visit www.cirm.ca.gov.

Contact:	Dale A. Carlson
	415/396-9117

Source URL: <http://www.cirm.ca.gov/about-cirm/newsroom/press-releases/09132007/renowned-scientist-lead-california-stem-cell-institute#comment-0>